



**The Billy P. Story | THE TRUTH HURTS**

TRENA MITCHELL, MA  
Executive Director  
Arkansas Cancer Coalition  
901 North University Avenue  
Little Rock, AR 72207  
(501) 603-5225  
[www.arcancercoalition.org](http://www.arcancercoalition.org)

GENINE LATRICE PEREZ, MA  
Executive Director  
Arkansas Youth Leadership Initiative  
628 West Broadway, Suite 201  
North Little Rock, AR 72114  
(501) 375-1338  
[gperez@aryouthlead.org](mailto:gperez@aryouthlead.org)  
[aryouthlead.org](http://aryouthlead.org)  
[yesteam.org](http://yesteam.org)

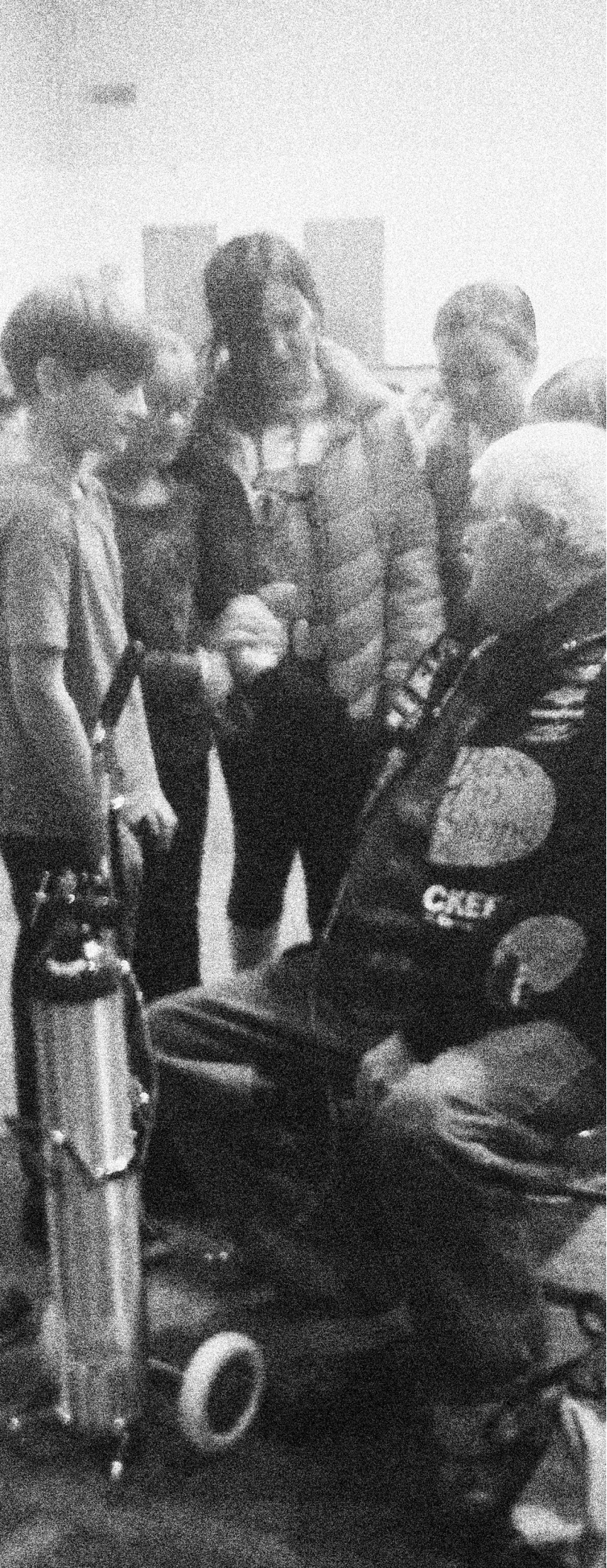
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Building Youth with Purpose

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# INTRODUCTION

It is not every day that we have the opportunity to meet ordinary people dealing with extraordinary circumstances, and who are willing to be open, honest, and in your face about their day-to-day struggles.

Fortunately, for the Arkansas Youth Leadership Initiative, we have Mr. William “Billy” Patterson. He is a man with a simple message: “If I had never smoked, none of this would have happened.” He is unapologetic about sharing the truth, and in Billy’s case, the Truth Hurts.

In fact, Mr. Billy is passionate about speaking to as many young people as he possibly can. His hope is to discourage young people from smoking. He is willing to expose his vulnerability and his past addiction to tobacco, and let others know the health consequences of his decision to use tobacco at a young age.

Because of Mr. Billy and so many people like him, we will continue to advocate for policy change, increase tobacco taxes, and advocate for marketing restrictions at the point of sale.

# THE PROJECT

Billy P's Story: Truth Hurts is a prevention tool to assist in educating youth of the dangers of tobacco and other delivery devices. By watching this video and participating in the activities, youth advocates learn how the decision to use tobacco has cost Billy his lifestyle, and may ultimately cost him his life.

## **Prevent Initiation of Tobacco Use among Youth**

OUR GOALS ARE:

To promote advocacy and empowerment to influence social norms and policies.

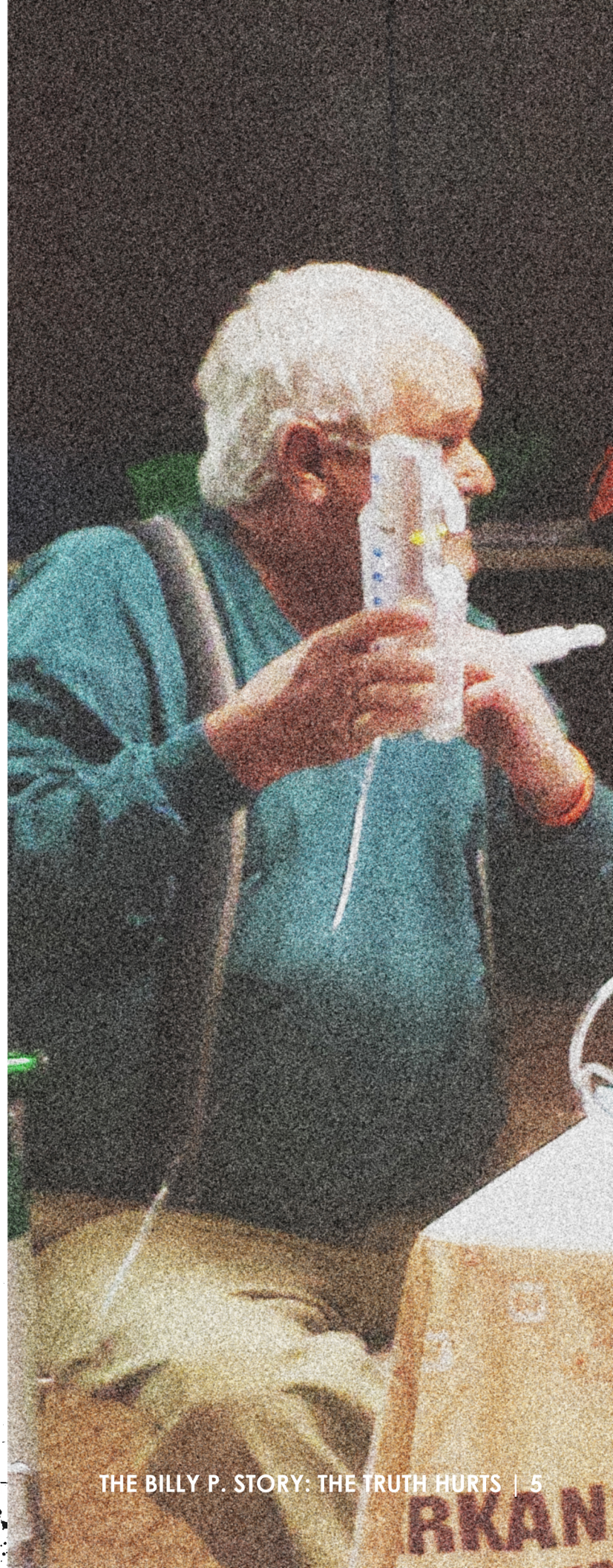
To increase youth awareness of the hazards of tobacco.

To decrease youth social acceptance of tobacco.

## **To promote Cessation among Youth and Adults**

OUR GOAL IS:

To promote family, parent, and positive role model collaborations with youth organizations; and promotes cessation among youth and young-adults.



# FACTS

Nicotine is more addictive than heroin or cocaine.

Smoking does not just cause damage to the lungs. Smoking can cause cancer almost anywhere in the body.

All cigarettes are harmful. There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke, and there is no safe cigarette.

An estimated 5.6 million children alive today will ultimately die early from smoking, equal to one child out of every 13 alive in the U.S. today.

Smoking has been the number-one cause of preventable death and disease and claims the lives of nearly 500,000 people each year.

All cigarettes are harmful. There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke, and there is no safe cigarette.

Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined.

Of all the kids who become new smokers each year, almost a third will ultimately die from it.

Cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals and chemical compounds.



The Billy P. Story

## THE TRUTH HURTS

by Genine L. Perez

In 1952, Billy was born William D. Patterson. Billy began smoking at the age of 14 (1966). That was just two years after the January 11, 1964 landmark U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health presented his findings regarding the negative health effects linking smoking and ill health, including lung cancer and heart disease. The report laid the foundation for tobacco control efforts in the United States. In 1966, the United States became the first country to require warning labels on cigarettes.

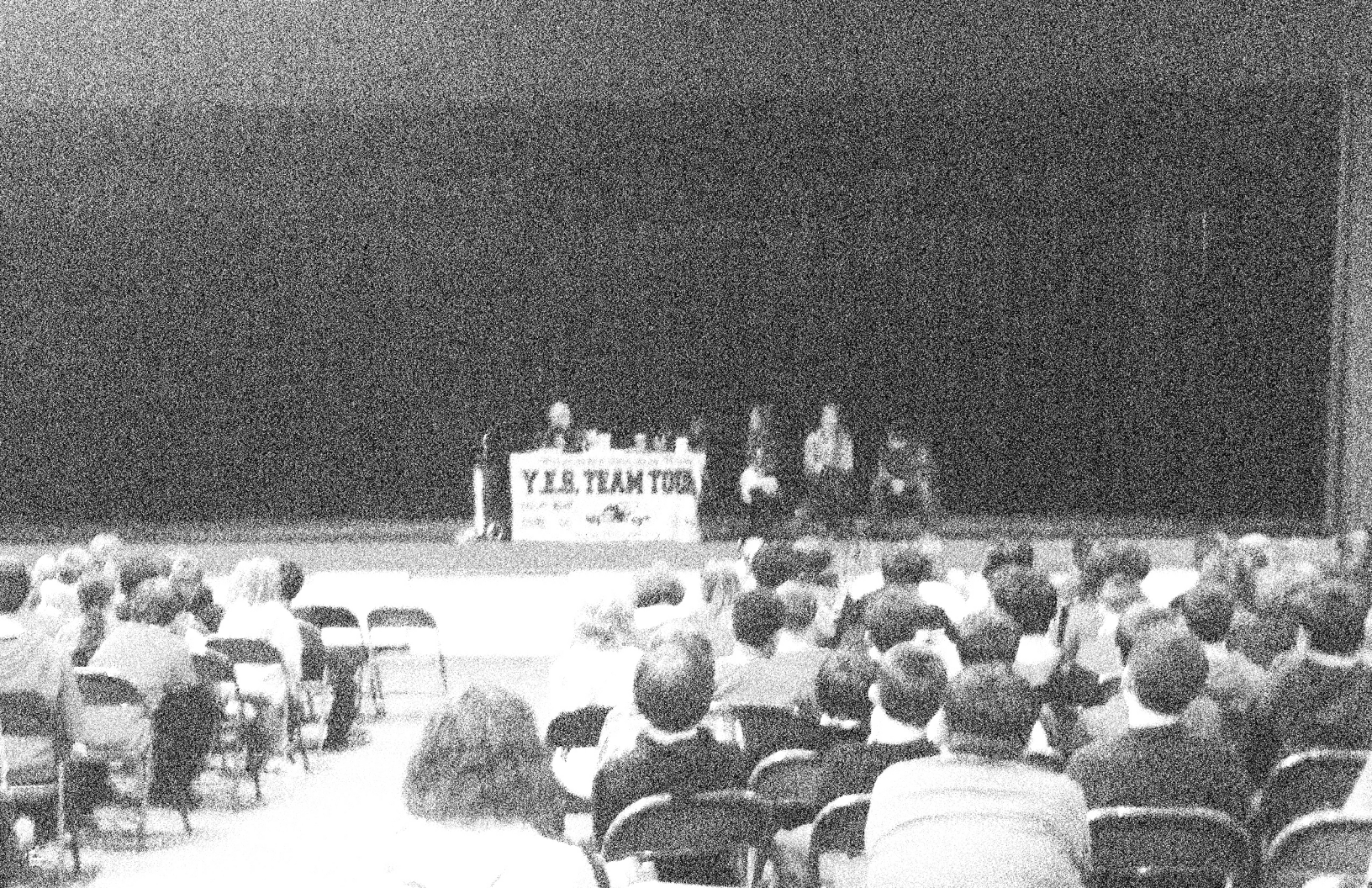


At 14, Billy was not aware of the report. He thought smoking was cool. Billy had friends and family that smoked, and was not interested in being told not to smoke. Billy didn't think about the effects of smoking. He ignored his father's request to stop smoking many a time, with the thought that if he smoked, then so could he. Billy continued his habit. For Billy, a report was insignificant, he was just being cool.

In 2011, Billy began suffering from the ill effects of his smoking; he was not getting enough oxygen to his brain. Billy smoked at least two to

three packs of cigarette a day for 51 years. On May 5, 2013, Billy was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) with the underlying disease emphysema. For Billy, the damage was already done and it caught up with him. Billy was told to quit smoking by his doctor. Billy told his doctor that he would stop smoking, but Billy continued to smoke despite advice not to do so.

Billy continued to work in his automotive garage and carried on without quitting smoking. He continued to get weaker and had difficulties breathing, and eventually stopped smoking on June 29, 2013. Billy was smoke-free for nine months. He felt good and began to breathe better, but on March 18, 2014, while at work, Billy lost feeling in his leg, and was immediately admitted into the hospital where he stayed for 56 days due to complications with the contrast dye the medical team used to save his leg.



Medical professionals were not aware that he was allergic to the dye, and because of the dye, he lost both of his kidneys.

While in the hospital reality of 51 years of smoking caught up with Billy. Billy now has to go to a local dialysis unit three days a week every week for the rest of his life. Billy has to carry his oxygen wherever he goes for the rest of his life. While Billy has some good days, he experiences some rough days too. After dialysis, Billy is extremely tired. During this documentary project, Billy had been attending physical therapy, and that too caused Billy

to be extremely tired, but fortunately for him, he no longer has to attend physical therapy appointment.

Thanks to a mini-grant from the Arkansas Cancer Coalition, Billy had the opportunity to meet with over 440 students and adults and share his story. Mr. Billy spoke with the Arkansas Youth Leadership's Initiative's Tobacco Control Youth Board leaders, college students, and friends from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and middle school students, teachers, and parents at Harmony Grove Middle School in Haskell, AR.



It is our hope that by viewing this DVD and participating in the activities that accompany this project, young people will be empowered to advocate for policy change, influence social norms as it relates to tobacco use, and to share Billy's story with their friends and family to promote a tobacco free lifestyle.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Thank you for making this project happen!*

## **2014-2015 Tobacco Control Youth Board Leaders**

Ayanna O'Neal  
Clinton Thomas  
Grace Brandt  
Joshua Brown  
Kaylan Morrow  
Kharlissa Lovelace  
LaBrian Phillips  
Marliyah Gilmore  
Raven Newton  
Sophia Santos  
Srisaipranav Bande  
Little Youth Advocate  
Isabella "Butterfly"

Rebecca Davis  
Videographer & Edits

Family Service Agency, Inc.  
Mr. Victor Werner,  
Executive Director  
Mr. Chris Gerhart,  
Counselor

University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
UALR Composition & Business Writing Students  
UALR Dining Services

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Mr. William "Billy P" Patterson

## **PROJECT RESOURCES**

The Truth Hurts | The Billy P Story

Watch Billy's Story on DVD/Online  
Get BP Activity Guide/Lesson Plan  
The Truth Hurts Pre and Post Test  
[TheBillyPStory.org](http://TheBillyPStory.org)

Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids  
[tobaccofreekids.org](http://tobaccofreekids.org)

Legacy  
[legacyforhealth.org](http://legacyforhealth.org)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
[cdc.gov/tobacco](http://cdc.gov/tobacco)

YEA! Youth Engagement Alliance  
[youthengagementalliance.org](http://youthengagementalliance.org)

**ARKANSAS  
YOUTH LEADERSHIP  
INITIATIVE**



GENINE L. PEREZ  
The Billy P Story: Truth Hurts  
Project Development Director